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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

Applicant: Raja et al.
Appl. No.: 10/692,363
Filing Date: October 22, 2003
Title: FLUID DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR USE WITH A SURGICAL PUMPING UNIT
Attorney Docket No.: ACMI-2.006.US
Pub. No.: US 2006/0122576 A1
Pub. Date: June 8, 2006

This is a decision on the request for a corrected patent application publication under 37 CFR 1.221(b), received on August 8, 2006, for the above-identified application

The request is DISMISSED.

Applicant requests that the application be republished because the patent application publication contains a material error, as the benefit/priority claim to the prior applications, which are recorded in PAIR, as amendments are not evident in the publication.

37 CFR 1.221(b) is applicable "only when the Office makes a material mistake which is apparent from Office records . . . Any request for a corrected publication or revised patent application publication other than provided as provided in paragraph (a) of this section must be filed within two months from the date of the patent application publication. This period is not extendable." A material mistake must affect the public's ability to appreciate the technical disclosure of the patent application publication, to determine the scope of the patent application publication, or to determine the scope of the provisional rights that an applicant may seek to enforce upon issuance of a patent.¹

The patent application publication does not include a mistake with respect to the preliminary amendment to the benefit/priority claim. The patent application publication does not include a mistake regarding the failure to include the preliminary amendment in the publication by the Office because patent application publications are not required to include preliminary amendments, according to 37 CFR 1.215(a),² which says the following, in part:

¹Changes to Implement Eighteen-Month Publication of Patent Applications, 65 FR 57023, 57038 (Sept. 20, 2000), 1239 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office Notices 63, 75 (Oct. 10, 2000) (final rule).

²Changes to Support Implementation of the United States Patent and Trademark Office 21st Century Strategic Plan; Final Rule, 69 FR 56482 (Sept. 21, 2004).

(a) ... The patent application publication will be based upon the specification and drawings deposited on the filing date of the application, as well as the executed oath or declaration submitted to complete the application. **The patent application publication may also be based upon amendments to the specification (other than the abstract or the claims) that are reflected in a substitute specification under Sec. 1.125(b),** amendments to the abstract under Sec. 1.121(b), amendments to the claims that are reflected in a complete claim listing under Sec. 1.121(c), and amendments to the drawings under Sec. 1.121(d), provided that such substitute specification or amendment is submitted in sufficient time to be entered into the Office file wrapper of the application before technical preparations for publication of the application have begun. (emphasis added)

§ 1.215(c) says the following:

(c) At applicant's option, the patent application publication will be based upon the copy of the application (specification, drawings, and oath or declaration) as amended, provided that applicant supplies such a copy in compliance with the Office electronic filing system requirements within one month of the mailing date of the first Office communication that includes a confirmation number for the application, or fourteen months of the earliest filing date for which a benefit is sought under title 35, United States Code, whichever is later.

While the patent application publication may now include a preliminary amendment, the Office is not required to use the preliminary amendment. The Office changed the procedures for publication of patent applications so as to publish applications as amended, when possible. Until 2004, patent application publications were published as originally filed. See Patent Application Publications May Now Include Amendments, 1281 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office Notices 53 (April 13, 2004) and MPEP 1121. Applicant did not file a substitute specification, which incorporated the preliminary amendment. See Pre-Grant Publication Helpful Hint: File Continuation or Divisional Application with a New Specification and Copy of Oath or Declaration from Prior Application, 1251 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office Notices 54 (Oct. 9, 2001). The Office correctly published the application in accordance with 37 CFR 1.215(a).

The mistake is not a material error under 37 CFR 1.221(b) because the benefit claim is improper. **The benefit claim provided by Applicant in the preliminary amendment is improper, because the application is not a national stage entry of a PCT application. The application is being treated as an application filed under 35 U.S.C. 111(a),** because did not clearly indicate that it was a submission to enter the national stage under 35 U.S.C. 371, (e.g. the transmittal letter indicated that the application was a nonprovisional application under 37 CFR 1.53(b)). See MPEP 1893.03(a). Applicant may consider making this application a continuation of the PCT application.

To make a benefit/priority claim, 37 CFR 1.78 in summary requires that the benefit claim to an earlier filed application be contained in the first sentence of the application or be submitted in an amendment or application data sheet within the required time frame within the later of four months from the actual filing date or the date on which the national stage commenced, or sixteen months from the filing date of the prior-filed application. According to 37 CFR 1.55, the priority

claim must identify the foreign application and filing date, within the required time frame within the later of four months from the actual filing date or the date on which the national stage commenced, or sixteen months from the filing date of the prior-filed application.³ Since a proper benefit claim to an earlier filed application was not made within the required time period, it was not properly published on the patent application publication.

In order to make a late benefit claim to the earlier filed applications, applicant must submit a petition to accept an unintentionally delayed claim under 35 U.S.C. 119 and 120 for the benefit of the earlier filed applications. The petition must include 1) the surcharge (\$1370) set forth in 37 CFR 1.14(t) and 2) a statement that the entire delay between the date the claim was due under paragraph (a)(5) of this section and the date the claim was filed was unintentional. The petition must also include a proper reference (amendment) to the prior applications in order for the petition to be granted.

Applicant is reminded of his duty to conduct a reasonable inquiry before filing a paper before the Office. See MPEP 410.

Applicants' request for a corrected patent application publication on August 8, 2006, may constitute a "failure to engage in reasonable efforts to conclude processing or examination of the application." See 1.704(c). This determination will be made on or after a mailing of a Notice of Allowance.

Any questions or requests for reconsideration of the decision, should be addressed as follows:

By mail to: Mail Stop PGPUB
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Va. 22313-1450

By facsimile: 571-273-8300

Inquiries relating to this matter may be directed to Mark Polutta at (571) 272-7709.



Mark O. Polutta
Office of Patent Legal Administration
Office of the Deputy Commissioner
for Patent Examination Policy

³ See Claiming the Benefit of a Prior-Filed Application under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119(e), 120, 121, and 365(c), 1268 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office Notices 89 (March 18, 2003).